Two bird story from the Mundaka Upanishad

The **Two Bird Story** is a classic parable from the **Mundaka Upanishad**. Vivekananda uses this story to explain the nature of the human mind and the relationship between the individual and the divine. [2, 3, 4, 5,20]

Picture acknowledgement – (Ref -20)

The Core Metaphor

The story describes two birds with golden plumage perched on the same tree: [6, 7]
The Lower Bird: This bird represents the individual soul (Jiva). It moves from branch to branch, eating the fruits of the tree. Some fruits are sweet (pleasures), and others are bitter (pains). As it eats, it becomes immersed in the world, experiencing bewilderment and sorrow.
The Higher Bird: Perched at the top of the tree, this bird represents the witness consciousness or the Supreme soul (Sakshi or Atman). It does not eat the fruit; it simply watches the lower bird with "pure and free delight". [3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12]

The Spiritual Lesson

According to Vivekananda's retelling, the two birds are inseparable companions. The lower bird eventually looks up and sees the higher bird—calm, silent, and content. As the

lower bird moves closer to its companion, it realises that they were never truly separate. The story teaches that by shifting the focus from the "eating" (experiencing worldly desires) to the "watching" (the divine nature), a person can transcend suffering and achieve a sense of perfection. [5, 8, 10, 13, 14]

[2] https://bonddcqlthedvrei.quora.com
[3] https://resanskrit.com
[4] https://books.google.com
[5] https://www.academia.edu
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[20} The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda/Volume 7/Inspired Talks/Tuesday, July 30